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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
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Item 43 of the preliminary list*
THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fourth year

Letter dated 26 March 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to bring to your attention a statement on the Middle East peace process by the heads of State and Government of the European Union, issued on 25 March 1999 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 43 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dieter KASTRUP
Permanent Representative of Germany
to the United Nations

* A/54/50.

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ANNEX

[Original: English and French]

Middle East peace process

The Heads of State and Government of the European Union reaffirm their support for a negotiated settlement in the Middle East, to reflect the principles of "land for peace" and ensure the security, both collective and individual, of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. In this context, the European Union welcomes the decision by the Palestinian National Union and associated bodies to reaffirm the nullification of the provisions in the Palestinian National Charter which called for the destruction of Israel and to reaffirm their commitment to recognize and live in peace with Israel. However, the European Union remains concerned at the current deadlock in the peace process and calls upon the parties to implement fully and immediately the Wye River Memorandum.

The European Union also calls upon the parties to reaffirm their commitments to the basic principles established within the framework of Madrid, Oslo and subsequent agreements, in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). It urges the parties to agree on an extension of the transitional period established by the Oslo agreements.

The European Union calls in particular for an early resumption of final status negotiations in the coming months on an accelerated basis, and for these to be brought to a prompt conclusion and not prolonged indefinitely. The European Union believes that it should be possible to conclude the negotiations within a target period of one year. It expresses its readiness to work to facilitate an early conclusion to the negotiations.

The European Union urges both parties to refrain from activities which prejudge the outcome of those final status negotiations and from any activity contrary to international law, including all settlement activity, and to fight incitement to hatred and violence.

The European Union reaffirms the continuing and unqualified Palestinian right to self-determination, including the option of a State, and looks forward to the early fulfilment of this right. It appeals to the parties to strive in good faith for a negotiated solution on the basis of the existing agreements, without prejudice to this right, which is not subject to any veto. The European Union is convinced that the creation of a democratic, viable and peaceful sovereign Palestinian State on the basis of existing agreements and through negotiations would be the best guarantee of Israel's security and Israel's acceptance as an equal partner in the region. The European Union declares its readiness to consider the recognition of a Palestinian State in due course in accordance with the basic principles referred to above.

The European Union also calls for an early resumption of negotiations on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks of the Middle East peace process, leading to the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978).